

FI-7286



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS
CHAIRMAN
EDUCATION
GAME & FISHERIES

CAUCUSES

NORTHWEST
FIREFIGHTERS

- ☐ MICHAEL K. HANNA, MEMBER
29 BELLEFONTE AVENUE
LOCK HAVEN, PENNSYLVANIA 17745
PHONE: (570) 748-5480
TOLL-FREE: 1 (800) 845-7846
- ☒ 102 TURNPIKE STREET
P.O. BOX 1134
MILESBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 16853
PHONE: (814) 353-8780
- ☐ 302 MAIN CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 202076
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2076
PHONE: (717) 772-2283

May 9, 2008

Surface Transportation Board
Attention: Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423

RE: RJ Corman Railroad Company, Beech Creek Branch Line – Construction
and Operation; Between Wallacetown and Gorton, Pennsylvania

Dear Ms. Rutson:

It is my understanding that the RJ Corman Railroad Company will be filing a petition to construct and operate a portion of the former Beech Creek Rail Line from Wallacetown to Gorton, Pennsylvania. The main purpose of this proposed line is to service a **proposed** industrial development project, which would include a landfill, bio-fuels plant and a quarry.

I strongly believe that it would be premature for the Surface Transportation Board to take any action on this petition at this time. I present to you the following reasons and ask for your careful review and consideration of these facts. The application for the landfill by Resource Recoveries, LLC, has been suspended since October 2006 due to the uncertainties connected with the proposed Interstate 80 interchange and also because of concerns that were raised by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Watershed Management Program. In May of 2007, the quarry applicant was issued a deficiency letter from the PA DEP. To date, those deficiencies have never been addressed. In regards to the bio-fuels plant, there have been no formal applications submitted for this portion of the proposed project.

One of the key initiatives of the Commonwealth is to develop tourism to the majestic Pennsylvania Wilds area. It is of vital importance that we protect and conserve the natural beauty of this rural treasure. The proposed plans for the Industrial development project would have a tremendous negative environmental impact and would ultimately be detrimental to tourism. The Snow Shoe Rails to Trails Association, through the hard work of many dedicated members and volunteers, has done an excellent job in developing and maintaining the rail trails, including the Peale Tunnel and the Via-duct

Bridge over the Red Moshannon. These trails are enjoyed by a multitude of residents and out of state visitors. A significant portion of their trail system would be lost by the reactivation of the rail line in this area.

I'm sure that after your careful review and consideration of these issues, you will come to the conclusion that it is indeed premature to take any sort of action at this time. If, however, for whatever reason, you choose to proceed with the proposal, I am requesting that an Environmental Impact Statement be required. Four federal agencies have identified concerns with the proposed industrial development project. These include the Federal Highway Administration, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Environmental Protection Agency. I believe this is a reasonable and necessary request due to the reasons above and the controversial nature of the related project.

I would appreciate it if you could please send me updates on this matter. I will look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions or I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very Truly Yours,



Mike Hanna

76th District
State Representative

MKH/tla